

CCC's Nativity Scene

Its Story Began in 1975



Each first Saturday in December, on Riverwoods Road in Lincolnshire, passers-by will see the men, women and youth of Community Christian Church putting up a life-size nativity scene in the church yard.

This scene is our children's Christmas gift to the community of Lincolnshire and all others who drive by our church. Through the nativity, we are sharing the center of our faith, which is Jesus Christ.

In the fall of 1975, the Christian Education Committee was making plans for the coming year. Ann Myers Irving, church school superintendent, requested a project be planned in which all the children could participate. The idea was born to create an outdoor manger scene with life-size figures.

Stevie Mills, a church member and artist, designed and drew patterns for the figures, outlining them on wood. Carl Dangremont then cut out each figure in his basement. The manger and stable were designed by Stephen Lyons.

The children came to class in old clothes three weeks before Christmas to paint the figures. The floor of Friendship Hall was covered with drop cloths and the wooden figures placed upon them. Each class sat on the floor around designated figures and painted them. Stevie Mills later added the finishing touches.

The children brought 25 cents weekly during November and December to help fund the project. Discussions were held each week about the meaning of giving to others, and the different ways it can be done. We talked a lot about how they were sharing their faith with the community through the nativity scene.

The first year a manger with a bright star, protected by an angel, covered baby Jesus, Mary and Joseph. The donkey and lambs watched nearby. Three kings approached in the distance.

The next year, the children requested more figures, especially camels for the wise men. That year, three shepherds, part of their flock, a camel, a cow and a little angel came to watch over them all.

The following year, the teachers requested more figures. A kneeling and two standing shepherds, two sets of twin lambs and two camels joined the scene.



The fourth year, a member of the congregation suggested that we add people from Bethlehem. It was decided to add thirteen children from around the world, dressed in native costumes, representing five races. They are an American boy and two girls, a Mexican boy, a Venezuelan girl, an Apache Indian girl, a Korean boy, an Eskimo boy, an Austrian boy, a Dutch girl, a Chinese boy, an African boy, and Japanese girl, which completed our nativity scene.

In 1996 it was time to replace some figures. Ginny and Perry Grace undertook the project. It was a three-year project: 1996, 1997, and 1999. It was called "Christmas in July."

Ginny traced patterns off the original figures. Perry Grace and Chuck Osicka cut out figures and sanded them. A great deal of research went into selecting the proper primer and enamel paints. No varnish was used to avoid the yellowing which was problematic for the original figures. Friendship Hall was once again converted into a studio. Children in the Sunday School wore old clothes and enjoyed painting and hearing the Christmas story in July without the distraction of the season's normal Santa Clause emphasis. Ginny painted the finishing touches over the following summer weeks.

On the back of most figures are the names of the children who helped to create them. For church members who have been part of the congregation since the 70s, it's fun to read the names and remember our labor of love.

Mary, three wise men, one camel, two shepherds, all the sheep, a cow, donkey, and two angels have been replaced. Eventually, some energetic souls will take on the task of replacing the remaining 8 figures (Baby Jesus, Joseph, a standing shepherd, a kneeling shepherd, a young boy holding a lamb, two camels, and the star) as well as the manger and the shed.

2008 marks our 33rd year of sharing our faith with others through our beautiful nativity scene.

